

Report to the YUFA Executive on the CAUT Forum
“Perpetual Crisis? Diversity with Equity in the Academy”
7-9 February 2014, Courtyard Marriott Downtown Toronto

co-authored by
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Five YUFA members attended the forum: Ida Ferrara and Frances Latchford, as YUFA Equity Officers, and Nick Mulé, Ellie Perkins, and Kelly Thomson, as YUFA Representatives. The five YUFA members collaborated on this report, summarizing the proceedings and concluding with a few suggestions and recommendations regarding specific actions they think YUFA should take to improve its equity positions and activities.

The CAUT Equity and Diversity Conference took place over three days (the agenda is attached to this report). It included two international keynote speakers (**Camille Nelson**, Dean, Suffolk Law School, and **Philomena Essed**, Professor of Critical Race, Gender and Leadership Studies, Antioch University) and a panel of four local speakers (**Sirma Bilge**, Associate Professor, Université de Montréal; **Sarita Srivastava**, Associate Professor, Sociology and Gender Studies, Queens University; **Grace-Edward Galabuzi**, Associate Professor, Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University; **David Newhouse**, Chair and Associate Professor, Indigenous Studies, Trent University). The forum also included small-group discussions during which participants were asked to raise concerns about equity, diversity, and affirmative action and to brainstorm in response to those concerns at both the local and the national levels within the context of CAUT. A break-out session took place after each keynote; a small-group discussion had been planned to follow the panel but was foregone in order to give more time for the discussion the panel elicited.

In what follows, summaries of the three plenaries and small-group discussions are provided in the order they took place. The concluding section at the end of the report provides reflections and suggestions about equity initiatives YUFA may wish to consider.

A. KEYNOTE: Camille Nelson – Suffolk University Law School
(Human rights, equity, and the university)

Lead Contributor: Ellie Perkins

The first plenary speaker was Toronto-born critical race theorist Dr. Camille Nelson, Dean of Suffolk University Law School in Boston. She presented on “Human rights,

equity, and the university.” In a very energetic and engaging talk, Dr. Nelson spoke of her own experience and noted that, when choosing where to do her own graduate work in law, she sought out universities with a strong equity focus and ended up at Columbia University Law School because of its center for critical race and legal studies. So her first point was that strong scholarship and a diverse faculty attract students as well as attention and awareness to equity studies; this is positive for a university’s reputation and builds its academic quality.

In the 21st century, she said, academia needs to mirror society; diversity is a process, a forward-movement verb, with no end in sight given all the work that must be done to advance different kinds of equity and all the intersectionalities of diversity.

Institutions come to be known by the work they do – and building diversity is work. Education is a location for justice work, a site for civil rights. Real struggles take place within academia, and justice work is not necessarily popular, but it is progressive, and everyone has a role to play. We ARE the institutions. She encouraged everyone to vote, speak out, choose to make a difference, not stand by on the sidelines. She spoke of Martin Luther King’s inspiring words in his Letter from Birmingham Jail: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly...”

<http://www.uscrossier.org/pullias/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/king.pdf>

Diversity improves productivity, counters group-think, and is so positive in many ways.

She spoke from her personal experience and encouraged all who care about diversity to step forward and assume the power, whenever possible. That is, don’t opt out of the possibility of leadership within sites of power; move up into administrative positions. Don’t make excuses about going over to the ‘dark side’. Become a chair, dean, or administrator in order to better use your passion and advance your views. Those with passion, experience, ability to think should get involved. Leadership is the place where we can make most difference. Canada on paper is better than the U.S. on paper in terms of equity and diversity: the difference is leadership.

She gave a number of specific suggestions for actions and attitudes to advance equity:

1. Make the implicit explicit. Articulate the assumptions, ask questions, advance transparency.
2. Look for the hidden norms and break them. Whose perspective is accepted? Whose is excluded?
3. Avoid we-they thinking. Who is defining or naming things, and why? MLK said that groups are more immoral than individuals – so counter this by defining the group in such a way that it cannot become immoral.

4. Remember context. Where is the information to move diversity forward? Don't disrespect the people like you, they are your and students' lifeline to the realities of discrimination. Respect your communities. Try not to just recruit from privileged classes.
5. Seek justice. What can you do to foster inclusion? Use the tools you have to push the goals. (For example, faculty members have power over the curriculum, what is taught, what is read. Use it to increase the diversity of voices heard in academia!)
6. Keep moving forward. When there is no momentum or critical mass, it is unfair, spiritually debilitating. Keep people from suffering alone. Even small increases in diversity are noticeable and important, and the progress is inexorable.
7. Invest and be strategic. Build credibility, hire people at top levels (admissions office, dean's office, placement office). When people see faces like theirs, they have more confidence and the spirit spreads.
8. Be committed; don't let up. Stack committees, set the scenes for change. Establish scholarships for diverse students to help them succeed.
9. Move outsiders into leadership positions.
10. Mentor those who will be able to make a difference. (She herself is so grateful for the strong mentorship of several white women allies, who were deans at other law schools.)
11. Ensure hiring and promotion criteria don't contain hidden biases.
12. Gradually take on leadership roles and make the groups diverse. Construct slates and bring diversity in at all scales.
13. Consider all opportunities available to you.
14. Build a pipeline to leadership, but also maintain external anchors so you aren't converted to the dark side. Caucuses, referees, support groups can all be crucial.
15. Gather data, keep it and use it. Budget black-boxes can hide the possibilities or lack thereof. Read and use accreditation reports. Numbers count for students and recruitment.
16. Be an ally! Cover for the point-people on specific issues, find strategic friends, and divide the work. Being "the only one" makes it very difficult to find your voice. Use the voice of privilege in a way that moves toward justice. Use the union's power to help people find their voice – not just for recruiting or promoting but also for supporting people once they're in.
17. Skills training is important to give people the credentials they need, whether for administration and budgeting skills, background on hiring and promotion processes, how to write grants and application letters, etc. – it's all learnable and some people may already know how to do these things while others do not. Set up a "leadership academy," formal or informal, to assist diverse candidates to move up. Set goals for leadership changes, and back them up with mentorship and training. Someone will fund this because it will make them feel good!

Dr. Nelson mentioned a book by Virginia Valian, [Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women](#), which discusses the hidden prejudices that accumulate to have big equity

results. The issue of members of equity-seeking groups who are not really allies for others in their group can be addressed by seeking out people based on their character, as Obama says, not on tokenism or surface factors. There are lots of people to choose from in every equity-seeking group. Build robust slates so you have choice and can select for quality and commitment.

Dr. Nelson's talk was a wonderful start for the forum, with a wealth of practical ideas, stories, and compelling motivation for initiatives of all kinds to advance equity.

B. KEYNOTE: Philomena Essed – Critical Race, Gender and Leadership Studies, Antioch University

(The other side of Everyday Oppression: Cultural Cloning and Durable Inequities in Higher Education)

Lead Contributor: Nick Mulé

Philomena presented an engaging keynote address that critically deconstructed the work of oppression in higher education, the way it clones itself systemically, and how such cloning contributes to a perpetuation of inequities therein.

Silencing was described as actively limiting and eliminating dissent, as one of the most effective forms of everyday racism, sexism, ableism, etc. She argued that refusing to be silenced restores and re-enforces the dignity repression seeks to violate. All the same, she acknowledged there are costs, such as having to deal with objections to accusations of oppression. Oppression itself, Philomena described as structural and systemically reproduced in economic, social, and political contexts.

She spoke of three dimensions of oppression: acts, experiences, and underlying values validating the workings of the normative and the normal as a result of which oppression integrates smoothly into everyday routine. She pointed out that our society has become hostile to originality, privileging homogeneity/likeness, but the widely spread tendency to homogenize is not natural. There is pressure on marginalized people to conform or they perish. Given this environment, Philomena argues that cultural cloning consists of a large package of cultural values based on durable inequality, such as cloning of standardization and bureaucratization. She believes that cultural cloning of higher education is based on the white male. As such, these white males select clones that most fit with their values; discrimination is instrumental in preserving cloning to meet norms. This inevitably leads to corporate education, and the corporate education model privileges masculinity.

But academia is supposed to be a place for intellectual growth, and we must thus engage in de-cloning. De-cloning starts with disobedience, but disobedience needs to be combined with an alternative: "I cannot do this but here is what we can do differently to achieve objective" as opposed to "I will not do this;" there needs to be

positive thinking. Philomena would rather see a university that is not corporate, but a learning community where everyone can be a whole. Unfortunately, universities create and sustain insecurity and burn out, whereas she proposes universities be learning centered with a social justice mission that reflects societal needs. She argues that there be less emphasis on publications and more on usefulness of knowledge and achievements for communities and humanity; less peer review and more peer learning which is most effective in a diverse environment; less competition and more collaboration; less homogenization and more heterogeneity (e.g., no students' or faculty's profiles). Undertaking such a project in university settings requires learning from diversity and non-dominant perspectives. It also requires engaging in principles of collaboration.

She advises us to start dialogues in our departments, questioning standards and norms. She encourages discussions about retirement and its impact on programs among faculty. She suggests placing the focus on how marginalization works. She recommends always continuing the conversation even with people who engage in toxic behavior. Finally, she urges that we claim the space and encourage others to join in community building. Philomena acknowledges carrying out such a project is a long and onerous struggle, but worth it.

C. SUMMARY OF INTRODUCTORY THEMES, CONCERNS, AND IDEAS FROM INITIAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

Lead Contributors: Ida Ferrara and Frances Latchford

This section provides a summary of key points and suggestions from the initial small-group discussions which were shared with the participants at the beginning of the second day of the conference.

1. We need to go beyond lip-service that is paid to equity and diversity within our institutions and CAUT (action and participation, not merely words).
2. We need to achieve and maintain diverse complements within small and/or remote universities as well as in urban settings.
3. CAUT and Union Executive committees need to work on educating and gaining faculty association members' support for equity goals and initiatives broadly and, ultimately, in collective agreements; to work well, equity committees need buy-in from faculty.
4. Union/Faculty Association leadership needs to realize diversity internally; it needs to represent the diversity it claims to support (CAUT has a role to play in terms of education), build on grounds gained, and deal with loss of institutional memory on equity and diversity issues.
5. Links between equity and academic freedom need to be identified and articulated (by CAUT and locally) in such a way that neither is undermined.
6. Equity audits need to be conducted regularly to track advances or declines in equity and AA hires and retention.

7. Stories from the margins must be amplified: what do these stories tell us about the equity and diversity in our institutions? What is evidence of good implementation of diversity policy?
8. Equity work, conferences, networks need to be sustained by CAUT and at local levels.
9. Equity strategies need to be incorporated into recruitment processes, along with retention strategies; there must be a conscious effort to find ways to help people after they are hired, especially around cultural differences (e.g., mentoring system).
10. We need to increase the range of union committees to provide avenues for learning and speaking out – broader education from CAUT to speed up change.
11. Casualization needs to be taken up more seriously as an equity issue.
12. Equity alliances and coalitions need to be built between universities and associations.
13. Equity and diversity coalitions with student organizations on campus need to be built: students have a voice that can also bring about change.
14. We need to articulate clear arguments on why diversity is important and prepare to deliver them all year-round.

D. PLENARY: Visible absences and the neo-liberal university

- **David Newhouse** – Indigenous Studies & Business Administration, Trent University
- **Sirma Bilge** – Sociology, Université de Montréal
- **Grace-Edward Galabuzi** – Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University
- **Sarita Srivastava** – Sociology, Queen’s University

Lead Contributor: Kelly Thomson

A very interesting set of 4 speakers who discussed some of the systemic issues that continue to produce inequality in university contexts.

David Newhouse, Trent University

David discussed how the Canadian university context excludes aboriginal faculty and students through resistance to differing truth traditions, lack of recognition of traditional knowledge, and a focus on individuals rather than family units. He offered the metaphor of “extending the rafters,” a practice of making a traditional longhouse larger in order to accommodate new family. He described how he has worked over years at Trent to change practices related to hiring, tenure, and promotion to incorporate aboriginal knowledge and has worked to educate new administrators to ensure that practices are understood. He noted how dependent the university is on people of goodwill to maintain practices.

Sirma Bilge, Université de Montréal

Sirma discussed how neo-liberalism affects human rights, particularly how radical neo-liberalism emphasizes non-redistributive recognition of inequality, i.e. differences that do not make a difference. She discussed Stewart Hall's work on how things are different but that differences do not matter in a neo-liberal context.

Grace-Edward Galabuzi, Ryerson University

Grace-Edward spoke of race and how racism is individuated, focusing on people as racist not organizations. The result of this thinking is an emphasis on changing the way individuals think and/or act rather than on changing organizational practices. He stressed that we should move away from a political approach and return to a structural approach to the equity, diversity, and inclusion struggle. He noted that the academe remains a hostile environment and that the university context is characterized by many loud debates about "incidents" of racism rather than on the silencing of racialization in the curriculum.

Making reference to a quote in a book edited by Frances Henry and Carol Tator, Racism in the Canadian University: Demanding Social Justice, Inclusion, and Equity, "to do justice to the opinions and arguments of others, we must have contact with them, interact with them, hear from them, and listen to them articulate and defend that which they believe in earnest," Grace-Edward argued for a shift in key discourses: from a critical discourse of antiracism, decolonization, and oppression towards an emphasis on reconciliation and non-hierarchical conception of diversity; he argued for a "reboot" in equity work to re-energize it by changing the frame from a neo-liberal one to a transformational agenda that makes the formerly-marginalized central, recognizes diverse knowledges, and makes universities safe places for all.

He suggested that, within academia, there is an illusion of inclusion: structures and practices of university are informed by Western middle class patriarchal elites, and traditions, in combination with state's discourse of multiculturalism (with notions of cultural democracy, freedom, racelessness, and colorblindness), contribute to a false sense of neutrality, fairness, objectivity, and public good (Carl James, chapter 5 of above-mentioned book). He argued that gathering data on representation will not make a difference; instead, we need to focus on thinking and doing: remaking practices.

Sarita Srivastava, Queen's University

Sarita described her studies of how the response by women in activist organizations to discussions of systemic racism were often met by emotional responses that effectively turned the tables on the person noting the racism by asking: "are you calling me a racist?" These expressions of outrage that emerge in discussions of systemic racism and the highlighting of specific practices that are racist effectively silence discussion and preclude constructive engagement with changing practices that could redress racist practices. She spoke of how cultural and historic forces affect behavior and the need to depersonalize discussions by recognizing the influence of these forces. She noted how discussions of systemic racism are difficult

to raise in the university context because of the reticence to consider systemic changes that would redress the legacy of racialization that persists.

E. CONCLUDING SUMMARY OF IDEAS, THEMES, STRATEGIES OR ACTION POINTS DRAWN FROM FINAL SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Lead Contributors: Ida Ferrara and Frances Latchford

This section provides a summary of the key suggestions from the final discussions which considered the question of what CAUT, Faculty Associations, and individuals can do in terms of next steps.

WHAT CAUT CAN DO

1. Establish a two-year cycle for the conference.
2. Develop model clauses to associations in bargaining.
3. Expand legal work beyond academic freedom to include equity and human rights.
4. Censure universities which violate human rights language (i.e., in their collective agreements).
5. Research/investigate use of confidentiality in human rights complaints.
6. Launch constitutional challenges to university tribunal decisions that contravene human rights (i.e., apparently, some tribunal decisions are being treated by courts as legal, when tribunal members have no significant legal credentials or background).
7. Develop better language to distinguish between harassment and academic freedom.
8. Guide local faculty associations with model procedures for gathering local equity data and evidence (e.g., salary, retention).
9. Consider age discrimination as it is increasingly a problem.
10. Carry out equity audits across the country and institutions.
11. Create a listserv of equity officers across institutions.
12. Develop regional equity and diversity caucuses to decrease isolation.
13. Establish network of equity officers across universities.
14. Encourage faculty associations that do not already have them to institute equity officers on their executives.
15. Tailor information so it is relevant to varied sizes/types of institution.
16. Travelling town halls on equity and diversity in the academe.
17. Develop a speakers' list as a resource for local faculty associations doing equity work.
18. Treat costs of CAUT conferences as an equity issue (i.e., not all participants are sent by their locals, but independently interested).
19. Develop an equity and diversity handbook with different equity lenses.
20. Develop a scorecard on equity and diversity.
21. Make an inventory of equity positions on faculty associations' executives and their compensation.
22. Initiate a national equity campaign.

23. Develop and share an equity survey template.
24. Develop and circulate an equity rolodex.
25. Determine how many collective agreements include affirmative action (AA) language and what an AA program looks like.
26. Develop a policy statement to support individuals who are in a vulnerable position when advocating for equity and diversity; as policy statements are often dangerous as they induce a false sense of security, consider including a statement about what would happen if policy were not followed.
27. Collect equity data – data/information is needed to make systemic statements about equity.
28. Facilitate comparison of equity language in collective agreements, including definition of work.

WHAT FACULTY ASSOCIATIONS CAN DO

1. Arrange to have an equity structure in place and communicate it to CAUT.
2. Coordinate equity efforts.
3. Educate members on intersectionality.
4. Ensure to have workshops.
5. Collect equity data and share with CAUT.
6. Include equity audits in collective agreements and share results with CAUT.
7. Train grievance officers on issues of equity.
8. Make equity a priority at regional conferences.
9. Ask CAUT to model equity on its own executive.
10. Ask for feedback on equity from everyone: what does an equitable institution look like?
11. Create/increase space where individuals can speak on equity issues and their experiences.
12. Build strategic alliances (e.g., at conferences) and establish equity networks.
13. Have a fund to assist individuals in making institutions accountable.
14. Pay closer attention to age discrimination as it is increasingly a problem.
15. Promote “Speak Up” campaigns to mobilize faculty to speak out regarding equity issues.

WHAT INDIVIDUALS CAN DO

1. Get more involved and connect with communities and organizations engaged in equity.
2. Educate students on equity issues and the importance of diversity (e.g., equity course).
3. Support training for new faculty.
4. Assist in identifying equity resources.
5. Get on committees and/or connect with people who can support those who are untenured and thus more vulnerable.
6. Network.
7. Highlight successes in education.
8. Lead by example.

F. COMMENTS

At the forum, we were struck by how far ahead York and YUFA are in some ways on equity issues. While we recognize that there is still lots to accomplish on the equity and diversity front, in speaking with colleagues at other universities, especially those in isolated communities across Canada, we were reminded that, at York, we benefit from being located in the diverse city of Toronto, with a wide pool of students and faculty applicants and research/curriculum possibilities.

It might be very helpful for equity activists at other universities (and also for our own perspectives and priority-setting) if YUFA were to take the time to synthesize and summarize our own past process on equity, in the context of York's changing scenarios, and make this story available through CAUT. Some of the questions YUFA should consider in this synthesis and summary are:

- How did YUFA establish its equity committee and how is it organized?
- How did we bring equity language into our Collective Agreement, including the language on the York equity audit?
- How has equity work evolved, not just within the union and collective bargaining, but also at the level of the university administration (SHEACC and the Centre for Human Rights, steps forward and steps back, etc.) through faculty and student pressure?
- How is equity reflected at York at the academic and university governance levels (equity committee at Senate and in some Faculty Councils; development of the School of Women's Studies, the Human Rights and Equity Studies department, the School of Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity, etc.)?

Some of the same issues arise everywhere, such as how to organize equity committees (identity-based representation for each group vs. cross-cutting and universal solidarity; priority-setting, etc.). Perhaps stories of others' experience can help people avoid reinventing the wheel, or at least be illustrative and useful. YUFA could draw upon the experience of some very committed equity activists to write up this story and make it available to others. Indeed, this suggestion is consistent with what transpired from the discussion sessions in terms of the need to share information, directly or via CAUT, about equity structures, equity language in collective agreements, and equity successes.

Other specific suggestions for YUFA are:

- Expand our conception of equity beyond the federal contractor program language, and bring this into our CA.
- Develop an ever-deeper 'bench' so that more and more equity activists are trained and included in key bodies, both within and outside the union, to work on intersectional equity issues, avoid burnout, and support each other.
- Intellectually draw the connections and educate people about post-modern subject positions and mutual epistemological respect vs. neo-liberal individualistic competition; this is an ongoing project of education.

- Keep raising the ante on equity audits, data collection, transparency, and sharing of information.